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THE TALKS OF EKNATH EASWARAN

The Enlightened Ones
The Glory of the Earth

STUDY GUIDE

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This study guide is part of a self-study course called *The Dynamics of the Mind*. Each study guide includes four lessons designed either for a BMCM spiritual fellowship group session or for personal study. If you are using this course on your own, or if you would like to engage in further discussion about the lessons, you are welcome to participate in our e-mail discussion group based on this course. Please e-mail estudygroup@easwaran.org for more information.

The DVD format offers several advantages that you may want to make use of in your study of these talks:

In order to enhance your comprehension of the talk, you can select the option of watching the talks with subtitles. After selecting “Play Talk” from the main menu, choose one of the options on the left-hand side of the screen.

If you prefer to watch the talks in shorter segments, you can watch one half at a time. Each DVD contains two 30-minute talks, each of which is split

into two sections. After selecting “Play Talk” in the main menu, choose the section you would like to watch.

If your spiritual fellowship group wishes to watch 15 minutes of a talk per week, you can allot 45 minutes of your meeting to reading and discussion (along the lines suggested below), and watch one section of the DVD before meditation. We recommend that you start meditating directly after watching the segment.

If you are not currently a member of a fellowship group and would like information on joining one in your area, please visit www.easwaran.org/fellowship

LESSON ONE

This month we conclude our study of *Conquest of Mind* with the two most challenging strategies for Self-realization recommended by the Buddha. This week we focus on “going to the root,” finding the real cause of our problems – self-will.

Reading

It is only fair to warn you that the Buddha is slowly backing us into a corner. This is his method of drawing his audience deeper. Often he starts out talking about familiar topics which do not challenge us much, but slowly he brings his scrutiny closer and closer until we find him right in front of us, looking us straight in the eye. Now he is upon us, saying, “The fourth strategy is ‘Go to the root.’ The first three strategies are preliminary. Now it is time to remove the real cause of your problems: why you get jealous, why you find yourself in a bad mood so often, why you get resentful with so little provocation.”

This is not to say that the first three strategies are unimportant. Without them we cannot even speak of going to the root of personal problems; they go so deep in the mind that we cannot reach them. But when our meditation can penetrate like a microscope, the Buddha can show us the bacillus that has been causing all our personal problems: self-will.

Some of the bacilli studied in medical school, I understand, can hide behind a number of symptoms. Self-will, similarly, is the root cause of problems very disparate in appearance. Some are so familiar that we think they are normal, or at worst beyond our control. Jealousy is one particularly strong form the infection takes. In a competitive society jealousy has to be rife, because comparing oneself with others is the very basis of both. Jealousy may disguise itself as mild and rational – over a friend’s appearance, a co-worker’s success, a neighbor’s new car, a brother-in-law’s happiness or prestige. But jealousy in any form is malignant. If it becomes a habit of mind, it can erode our security and self-confidence to a fragile shell.

There is no reason to be surprised if we find ourselves afflicted with this condition. We are conditioned on all sides to compare ourselves with others, to climb higher by pulling others down, to gain by taking, to win by making others lose. The few times I have gone to sports events in this country, for example, I have been pained by the language coaches sometimes use to spur their teams. By the end of the third quarter, the simple “Go get ‘em!” has been replaced by the even more primitive “Kill!”

The antidote to this kind of overzealous competition was given by an English poet in familiar lines: what matters is “not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.” Often I don’t even remember who wins a good match. I remember a spectacular match between Bjorn Borg and Jimmy Connors when I was so full of admiration for the play on both sides that at the end I exclaimed, “Why don’t they give a first-place trophy to both players?” The preoccupation with winning is not at all a mature outlook to cultivate. No matter how high the stakes, as human beings we should manage to keep our opponent’s welfare in view as well as our own. This attitude will help us stay free from the severe anxieties and animosities that overzealous competition breeds.

The quality we *should* try to cultivate is the exact opposite of competition. The term in Sanskrit is *mridu*: soft, gentle, tender, sweet. In the *Mahabharata*, the tremendous epic of which the Bhagavad Gita is a small part, a beautiful verse reminds us that one who is really strong is gentle. Only a weak person resorts to harsh, rude, vengeful behavior. Those who are full of inner strength can tire you out with their patience, their consideration, and their unflinching love.

In a personal relationship, I don’t think anything can be more effective. Coming from a large matriarchal family, I grew up in an atmosphere where women practiced this kind of strength as a way of life. I can proudly say that I have yet to see anyone who did not respond to tenderness in action. Even when momentarily angry or agitated, everyone responds to the kind of tenderness that is tough inside, that can oppose when necessary without being brusque. Without this kind of inner toughness, the Buddha tells us plainly, it is not possible to maintain a continuously loving relationship with anyone.

To find successful representations of love these days, either in art or in life, is like coming upon an oasis in a desert. The Buddha gives us far higher standards. We should learn to be continuously in love, he implies; and not only that, our love should always grow. We should never allow ourselves to fall out of love; otherwise love cannot last.

From this you can get some idea of the immensity of the task he is laying out for us. Yet it is possible for all of us to aim for what Catholic mystics call “love without an object,” in which anyone who comes within our orbit receives the fullness of our love. This is the lofty state that the sincere practice of meditation and its allied disciplines can put within our reach.

The moment somebody says, “I don’t like that person,” I tell myself, “What an opportunity!” I am not being rhetorical. That is how I see a dislike now: as a grand avenue opening up onto a more joyful future. “She irritates me” translates as “She

can teach me to be more patient.” “He intimidates me” can be heard as “He gives me the opportunity to make myself unshakable.” Again, this is a matter of emphasizing the positive everywhere. Every ordeal we can look on as an opportunity to become stronger and more patient; every confrontation, as a chance to learn how to cooperate. Every obstacle in life can become a precious opportunity to grow.

This is why the Buddha calls his path “going against the current.” If you want to follow me to freedom, he says, be prepared to swim upstream, against the river of conditioning. Be prepared to grapple continuously with the fierce flow of your negative mental currents. Struggling like this builds up our muscles. In time our strokes will become almost effortless and our sense of purpose irresistible.

When you feel jealous of somebody, therefore, the answer is not in competing; that will only make your case of insecurity worse. Why should you compare yourself with anyone? The very basis of security for every one of us is the assurance that the Lord dwells within us as our very Self. The deeper you go in meditation, the more sure of this you feel, the more at home with yourself and the world around you. Whoever you are, whatever your weaknesses, you know you can fulfill the purpose of your life and be a blessing to many others.

Every one of us can make an enormous contribution to life. What is important is how steadfastly we are practicing the spiritual disciplines that bring us closer to life’s goal. When you are giving this effort your very best, nothing that another person has, nothing that another person is, can draw your envy. Gradually you will come to feel that you live in everybody. What reason could you have to envy anyone on the face of the earth?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

In this reading, Sri Easwaran is suggesting that we can build our capacity to love by learning to identify self-will as it arises in daily living, and taking steps to reduce it. In terms of the Eight Point Program, this is putting others first. Please take a few minutes to reflect silently on some of your relationships. When problems arise, such as misunderstandings or conflicts or alienation, what role does your self-will play in contributing to them? Note that the other person’s self-will may very well be involved, and may play a major role in causing the problem. But in nearly every problem, it is possible to find some way in which our own self-will is contributing to the difficulty, if only in reaction to another person’s agitation. That portion of our own self-will is the “lever” we can press to improve the situation.

Now, in the light of this reading, how might you “swim against the current” of your self-will? In what small way might you change your responses so as gradually to subtract your own personal agitation from emotionally charged situations? How might the other allied disciplines aid you in this?

When it's time for inspiration, please watch the first half of the first talk on the disc, “The Enlightened Ones.”

Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

LESSON TWO

We are studying the final chapter of *Conquest of Mind*, entitled “Strategies for Freedom.” This week we move to the last, seemingly impossible strategy – eliminating the source of our problems by extinguishing self-will (or the “ego”) completely. In our discussion, let’s use the term *self-will* rather than *ego*, because in certain schools of psychology the term *ego* can refer to a healthy function of personality, while most people will agree that self-will is a limiting factor in our personal development, disrupting relationships and impeding spiritual growth.

We will be reading what Sri Easwaran says about one of the most important qualities needed for Self-realization: compassionate detachment. Entering into the unconscious can sometimes be a dismaying experience, when we discover how much our *asavas* (unconscious habits of mind) have been causing the problems we previously attributed to other people. At such times there is a great temptation to get distracted or fall asleep in meditation in order to avoid making these uncomfortable discoveries.

However, by cultivating compassionate detachment towards ourselves and others we can learn to bear the discomfort and discover the tremendous rewards of deepening self-awareness. We can see that, though it’s true that self-will has influenced our thinking, we now have the capacity to change, finding new opportunities for love in our relationships and drawing us closer to others.

Spiritual fellowship, or *satsang*, is the ideal context for this work, and that will be the focus of our reflection.

Reading

The Buddha has been building toward a tremendous climax. With the first strategy he starts out tickling us with a feather, as it were. Then he coaxes us along with a branch. Finally, when he is sure we can stand it, he cracks us over the head with the whole trunk. That is the Buddha’s way, and he is going to bring on the trunk right now. “After you have learned to deal with the mind in these four ways,” he says, “prepare yourself for *abhinigraha*.” It sounds ominous, and it is. *Nigraha* means “destroy”; *abhi*, “completely.” “Kill the very source of your difficulties,” the Buddha says, “and then make doubly sure that it is dead.” That is the Buddha for you.

After you have been meditating sincerely for years, you will find that a number of beneficial changes have gradually been taking place. You have learned how to deal effectively with most difficulties in life, and the quality of your daily living has improved immensely. But you have descended gradually to a level of consciousness where your compulsions, your *asavas* or *samskaras*, are few but ferocious. Instead

of a hundred Lilliputians to fight with, you now face a mighty Goliath. You may not recognize him at first, but you feel there is something very familiar about him. Small wonder: he is the ego, your very own expression of separateness, selfishness, and self-will.

At this level we begin to see clearly how many of our difficulties in life, particularly in personal relationships, have been caused by this arrogant creature. Fortunately, by this time we have also developed enough compassion not to blame ourselves, any more than we blame other people for their shortcomings. Otherwise we could easily be overwhelmed by a sense of guilt. We are making an amazing discovery: this petty creature is not who we really are. He is an imposter, pretending to be us, and all these years he has fooled not only others but ourselves. This discovery frees us to put all our energy into fighting back against the ego without quarter.

In the Christian tradition this aggressive figure is called the devil. There is practical wisdom in this tradition, for it reminds us to identify not with the ego but with the Self. The Sufi mystic Jalaluddin Rumi answered those who said they did not believe in the devil with a simple statement: “Look into your own hearts.” The devil merely personifies the dark forces that every human being has inside: self-will, violence, anger, greed, jealousy, revenge.

The struggle with self-will goes on and on and on, throughout the day and eventually throughout the night. Actually, this is a struggle that we take up from the very first day of meditation, and the harder we try at the disciplines, the sooner we will win. This is the culmination of all our years of struggling at spiritual growth. We are in the finals, at Wimbledon on Centre Court. Do Steffi Graf or Jimmy Connors complain when they face a rugged opponent in the finals? They find a fierce joy in it; they know the very difficulty of the challenge will draw out their best. The Buddha’s words of encouragement are in this same vein: “Clench your teeth.” That is a literal translation. Play hard, he says, and every time you lose a point, hit back – by defying a selfish urge.

You will come to find a wonderful exhilaration in this battle. The rounds can go on for hours at a time. They can be drawn out for days, weeks, even months together, with a lot of give-and-take on both sides. You get worn out, but you hang on out of sheer determination.

Yet there comes a time in the lives of even great mystics when they lament, “I cannot do this by myself. How can I defeat my own self-will?” This critical juncture is when the spiritual teacher comes to the rescue. My own teacher, my grandmother, taught me from a very early age to defy my self-will. Much later, after I took to meditation, she was able to awaken in me the overwhelming desire not to be dic-

tated to by self-will under any circumstances. This great desire gradually began to draw the power of all my other, smaller desires; finally, all my desires flowed together into the colossal desire to defeat self-will and be free. That is why it is so important to strive to unify desires from the outset. Ultimately there is not the slightest doubt that everyone who practices these disciplines with sustained enthusiasm can and will win this battle. The main question is how long we are going to let ourselves get knocked about first.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

In the last paragraph of this reading, Easwaran emphasizes the important role played by the spiritual teacher. For many of us, one of the times when we feel most connected to Easwaran as our spiritual teacher is when we are participating in spiritual fellowship. Spending time with others who share our spiritual interest and aspiration can reawaken the fire of enthusiasm when it has dwindled. It can remind us of the many little victories that our practice of the Eight Points has brought us, even when the challenges seem too big to surmount. And it can help us develop compassion for ourselves as well as others, at those times when self-will obscures the Self.

Please reflect on how spiritual fellowship – whether at a BMCM retreat or Satsang, or with your faith's congregation, or with other kindred spirits – has helped you cultivate compassionate detachment. How has it given you the strength to cling to your ideals? How has it helped you draw closer to what Easwaran calls the inner teacher – the voice of wisdom within you? How might you deepen your experience of spiritual fellowship?

When it's time for inspiration, please watch the second half of the first talk on the disc, "The Enlightened Ones."

Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

LESSON THREE

This week's reading picks up where we left off last week, in the middle of a section devoted to the most difficult challenge in the spiritual life, extinguishing self-will. Sri Easwaran is analyzing self-will in the context of the Buddha's term *asava*, meaning a compulsive, unconscious tendency of the mind to dwell on things. We will concentrate our reflection and discussion on how to use slowing down to win over this "dwelling capacity" of the mind, and use it to our benefit.

Reading

The central *asava* in self-will, remember, is the tendency to get selfishly attached. Earlier I used the word "obsession." Most people have an inherent tendency to dwell on things, to think about something over and over and over. We developed this precious capacity through millions of years of evolution. I say "precious" because one-pointed absorption, when free, is the secret of genius. Without it, we could never learn to meditate. But usually this capacity is not free. That is what happens when we dwell on ourselves. Then thinking becomes compulsive and we lose the choice of what to dwell on. It is this adhesive *asava* of attachment which gets us stuck in all sorts of difficulties, particularly in personal relationships.

To paint a vivid picture of this elusive character, Self-will, and his typical habits, I am going to draw on a pastime which I usually don't even like to mention: fishing. The seriousness of this topic calls for a strong image. So picture, if you will, Self-will as the Father *Asava*, seated on his riverbank in one of those fold-up hammock chairs and decked out in waterproof rubber pants, fishing in the troubled waters of consciousness. He has his cooler full of beer close at hand in case he gets bored, but usually you will find him about to nod off, with a slightly wicked grin on his face, waiting for an unpleasant memory to happen along. When he feels a nibble on the line, he jerks into action and slowly starts reeling it in, involving us more and more in a negative line of thinking.

What happens when we become the victim of an obsession is easy to picture. Even if we have been caught before, the bait seems so attractive that we still feel we have to bite. We may even come to believe that being caught by Father *Asava*, that dangling at the end of the line with a hook in our mouth, is the greatest thing in the world. If we are not careful, Father *Asava* will reel us in and stick us away in his little basket.

You can imagine the determination and courage it takes to keep swimming in the other direction while this fisherman is slowly reeling us in. It hurts to pull loose

from an asava, especially if the hook has gone deep. That is the kind of effort required to undo a powerful asava like resentment.

Much more efficient, of course, is not to get hooked in the first place. Yet even when an obsession is fairly strong, there are still ways to take out the hook. One is to refuse to act on that obsession, however strong the pull. You may not yet be able to change your line of thinking, but you can make a good effort not to speak or act the way it is urging you to; otherwise you are playing into the fisherman's hands.

A second way is to not incriminate other people. Those who fall into the habit of blaming others for their compulsive attachments and obsessions are swimming straight for the hook and biting hard. When you feel that somebody is causing you trouble, for example, or purposely trying to agitate you, or pursuing you, or avoiding you, remind yourself, "This is just old Father Asava, fishing in troubled waters." You may find it helpful to keep a little reminder on your desk or calendar, where you can see it often. It will help you, and it will help the people you feel inclined to blame as well.

Here is the positive side: this same capacity for habitual obsession, if we can win it over, becomes a splendid capacity for continual contemplation. That is the intent behind each of the eight points in my program. I think it is also the reason that the Compassionate Buddha never advocated ascetic practices but always taught the Middle Path. Virtually all our human faculties – our senses, our emotions, our imagination, our intellect, our will – are meant to serve us as friends. We should win them over, not crush them, because we are going to need all of them as our allies later on in the struggle against self-will.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Here, Easwaran gives two ideas for how we can avoid ending up in Father Asava's basket. But they're both difficult. One is to refuse to act on the obsession, "however strong the pull." The other is not to blame others.

As hard as we may try to pursue these two strategies, often before we know it we find ourselves being "reeled in" by a compulsive line of thinking – whether its lure is anger, fear, or greed. In Easwaran's perspective, one of the reasons this happens is that we are moving so fast through life, and our thoughts are racing so fast, that we miss the opportunity to change our instinctive behavior.

Can you observe this dynamic in your life? If you were to adopt a slower pace, how might that make you less vulnerable to the lure of compulsive self-willed thinking? Remember Easwaran's

“red pencil” exercise, in which he listed all his daily activities and drew a line through those that were neither necessary nor beneficial. If you were to do that today, what items might be reduced or eliminated? How might that help you slow down and reduce self-will?

If you were able to redirect your capacity to dwell on things, to what would you direct it? What positive focus could absorb the energy and attention that now goes into negative channels?

When it's time for inspiration, please watch the first half of the second talk on the disc, “The Glory of the Earth.”

Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

LESSON FOUR

This week we reach the thrilling conclusion of our year of study. Throughout *Conquest of Mind*, Sri Easwaran has been examining the dynamics of the mind. He has shown us how to break the connection between stimulus and response, how to juggle with our likes and dislikes, how to think in freedom and love continuously.

In Chapter Ten, “Strategies for Freedom,” he has walked us through the final, seemingly impossible challenge facing every spiritual aspirant – eliminating self-will. Now, in the book’s concluding paragraphs, he reveals the tremendous spiritual force which enabled the great mystics to achieve the impossible – or rather, to witness this great transformation occurring in their own lives. None of them, Easwaran has said, would say that they *achieved* Self-realization by themselves. They did all they could and gave all they had, and found themselves carried forward by a force much greater than themselves.

Reading

In practical terms, what does it mean never to be hooked by self-will? It means the agitation in your mind ceases. Everybody, I think, knows the feeling of helplessness that comes with an agonizing memory, a paralyzing fear, a maddening conflict. We just don’t know what to do, and the memory, the fear, the conflict, repeats itself over and over and over in our mind. The agony lies not in the memory or fear or conflict but in the repetition. When we are not hooked by self-will, we can stop the repetitive agitation of the mind cold. When the mind is still, how can there be agitation? We still grieve when others suffer, but we do not suffer for ourselves; and our grief for others releases the will and resources to love and help and serve.

The key to this is detachment – detachment from our own ego, which is terribly difficult to cultivate. Here, devotion to a divine incarnation – Jesus, Sri Krishna, the Buddha, the Divine Mother – helps greatly, for it gives us a focus for our love outside the narrow compass of self-will. The subtlety is that this divine focus is not outside us. The Lord is our real Self, embodying the divine qualities which all of us have within us.

It follows that when we are looking for the Lord, unifying our desires to realize him, the Lord is looking for us at the same time. Meister Eckhart, the towering mystic of medieval Germany, goes even further: the eye with which you see God, he says, is the same eye with which God is looking all the time at you. Imagine peeking through a keyhole in the mind and seeing the Lord looking back at you! We don’t realize that he can open the door to deeper consciousness from inside;

yet silently, subtly, all the time we are banging away on the door, he is undoing the latch on the other side. This is what devotion to a spiritual ideal can do.

My own spiritual ideal is Sri Krishna, whose teachings in the Bhagavad Gita give us a perfect manual for spiritual living. The literal meaning of the name *Krishna* is “he who attracts us”: he who draws us to him, right from within. The pull the Lord can exert is infinite, yet he can only draw us as close as we want to come. Only when we throw aside our excess luggage, the dead weight of our love for self-centered pursuits, can he draw us to himself.

I have learned to look upon Sri Krishna as my divine employer, my Boss. He takes much better care of us than we do of ourselves. From the first day I saw how he cares for those who serve him, my heart has belonged to him. There have been instances in the early days of the Blue Mountain Center when, being human, I sometimes made poor decisions. But such is Sri Krishna’s love that he says, “Even though your decision was wrong, the consequences are going to be right because you were trying to act in my service.” This is infinite love. After all, what boss on earth will say, “You’ve made a poor decision, but I’m still going to promote you”?

This is the assurance you get when you devote your life selflessly to a supreme cause. Even before Self-realization, if you have done your best and still find yourself getting caught by an asava or sinking under the steady attack of self-will, the Lord will guard you if you call on him sincerely with all your heart.

When you realize the divine Self within you, the Bhagavad Gita says, you are launched beyond superficial living like a missile. Your joy and your capacity to contribute to life are multiplied a million times. To inspire us, the Buddha has given us in one sentence a model of ourselves as glorious and yet as human as any we could ever desire. “Love the whole world,” he says, “as a mother loves her only child.” Love like this will plunge us into deepest consciousness and release in us the power to make a lasting contribution to all of life.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

In this excerpt, Easwaran is implying that in order to transcend self-will, with which we identify ourselves so compulsively, we need a deeper sense of who we really are. The lure of selfishness is so great that we can only let go of it when we see a vastly more fulfilling experience beckoning to us, urging us to leave behind the petty limitations of self-will for the experience of loving without limit.

In the Eight Point Program, reading the mystics is the point designed to help us draw upon this powerful force, called devotion or spiritual longing. In what ways has reading the mystics increased your longing for spiritual growth, or your devotion to your spiritual ideal? How might you deepen your practice of reading the mystics? How might you use the other points to deepen your devotion?

When it's time for inspiration, please watch the second half of the second talk on the disc, "The Glory of the Earth."

Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

May 17, 1980, Part One

We are about to conclude the great Buddhist scripture called the Dhammapada, which we took up for our practical commentary about three years ago.

*yassa gatim na jananti devagandhabbamanusa
khinasavam arahantam tam aham brumi brahmanam*

It is again the same question: Whom shall we call an illumined man, an enlightened woman? On whom shall we look upon as having fulfilled the supreme purpose of life? I have been bantering some people around me that if they ever are asked the question, what can I give to somebody who has everything? I think the right answer is a purpose in life, a goal in life, without which everything is nothing.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna will say:

*mayyeva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim niveshaya
nivasishyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na samshayah*

It's a very personal message for me through my teacher where Krishna says, *mayyeva mana adhatsva*: learn through the practice of meditation and the allied disciplines to keep your mind always on the Self, not on the body, not on the mind, not on the senses, not on the intellect, yours or anybody else's, but keep it always on the Self, who is the same in one and all.

Through many, many years of arduous discipline, which have come to me also with great difficulty, just as they are coming to you, and through the benediction of my teacher's guidance, my mind has been enabled to rest in the Self, which means that even though I communicate with you intellectually or verbally or physically, it is actually, at the deepest level, a communication between the same Self. It's not a dialogue; it is a monologue; it is a soliloquy.

And in the last verse, on which I shall be commenting at great length, the Buddha will put it again in his inimitable language where he says, "The illumined man has done what he has to do. The illumined woman has done what she has to do." In other words, if you tell the Buddha that you have ten degrees that you have earned and ten degrees that are honorary, he will say, "You haven't done what you have to do." If you tell him that you have orbited around the earth,

crossed the Atlantic in a balloon, attained great prestige and power, he will still maintain, just as the Gita will maintain, “You haven’t done what you have come here to do.”

And according to the Hindu and Buddhist sages, you will have to come over and over again until you do what you have to do: *Mayyeva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim niveshaya*.

Having grown up in the intellectual world of scholars and scholarship, I easily understand the provocations of the intellect, and I have great sympathy with intellectual questions. But I go very much in the footsteps of the Buddha that most intellectual questions do not apply to the highest state of consciousness because that is where words turn back frightened, as Shankara says. Thoughts turn back frightened. And *mayi buddhim niveshaya*: when your intellect has also learned to rest in the Self, I think in one of the glorious Upanishads, there is a simile of the bird flying from morning till evening, gets tired, and then comes to rest in a nest on the tree. Similarly, this mind of ours, how long has it been agitated? According to the Hindu and Buddhist tradition, it has been agitated for billions of years, and the Buddha says, aren’t you tired? Your mind must be tired now. So, why not give it rest, which it richly deserves.

And I think life can become so full of joy and so full of love, if only we know how to rest the mind. It’s one of the last achievements in meditation where you can actually tell the mind, “There is no more need to fly about, to wander about. Why don’t you come and rest in the Self, which is one and the same in all?” So when the mind is still, when the intellect is stilled, when the ego is still, when self-will is still, then the Katha Upanishad would say, that is the highest state. Until you attain that, you cannot even imagine that you are capable of attaining that state. It is only after you have attained that state of “no-mind,” as the Zen people call it, “no ego,” as the Hindus call it, you will realize what tremendous security you have, what tremendous love you have to function in the world.

And in the language of the Gita, Sri Krishna says, *nivasishyasi mayyeva*. Then, when your heart is full of love for me in everyone, when your mind has been stilled, when your self-will is no more, then you are not living in Petaluma, you are not living in Sebastopol. *Nivasishyasi mayyeva*: wherever you live, you live with Krishna, in Krishna. This is the highest state of consciousness, which is our destiny, which is journey’s end for us. And until we attain this, nothing we have done is of any consequence because we still have not done what we have to do.

And the Buddha, now about to conclude, uses glorious words: *Yassa gatim na jananti devagandhabbamanusa*. To know the ways of an illumined man or a woman, you have to be illumined. To know why the Buddha acts in a particular way, you have to be the Buddha, you

have to have awakened yourself. To understand why Jesus acts in a particular way, you have to awaken yourself from the lowest state to the highest state of consciousness.

So the Buddha says, *yassa gatim*. *Gatim*, whose way, one of the – there are two beautiful names for the Buddha: *Tathagata*, who has gone this way, saying, “Follow me, look at my footprints, follow in my footsteps.” But I like even better the other name: *Sugata*, who, as has been said of Jesus beautifully, who went about doing good. That’s the simplest way of describing the Buddha. Wherever he was, he did good – to those who liked him, to those who disliked him, to those who helped him, to those who hindered him – because it was his nature to do good. He had attained Buddha nature, according to Zen, which is to do good for all. *Bahujana hitaya bahujana sukhaya*.

Devagandhabbamanusa, not even the gods can know the way of the Buddha. Not even *gandharva*, angels, can know the way of the Buddha. How can then *manushya*, ordinary human beings, know the way of the Buddha? In other words, over and over again, all the great mystics will say, “If you want to know how we love, how we live, you have to become like us.”

Khinasavam. The Buddha calls it *khinasavam*. *Asava* is *samskara*, and whose *samskaras* have all been weakened greatly, whose latencies and potencies have lost their compulsion, who can now act freely, think positively, refuse to think negatively, who can act creatively, not because of love of pleasure or profit, but because of his capacity or her capacity to contribute to life.

Arhantam. It’s a very famous word in Buddhism. *Arhat*, you’ll often come across it in the Buddhist scriptures. All that it means in Sanskrit is *arh*, to deserve. And there is a pungency about it, very characteristic of the Buddha, who is saying, you deserve to be called a human being only if you love everybody. In other words, you have the *chances* of becoming a human being. In order to become a human being, you have to love all. If you say, “We love only two or three people, just our own immediately around us,” that’s not very different from the state in which animals find themselves. *Tam aham brumi brahmanam*.

[Section Two]

*yassa pure cha paccha cha majjhe cha n’atthi kimchanam
akimchanam anadanam tam aham brumi brahmanam*

Every word is like a pearl. *Yassa pure cha paccha cha*, who never looks to the past, who never looks to the future. It is those people who live partly in the past who are resentful because to be resentful you have to let a part of your mind dwell on what he said to me that day, what she said to me that day. So such people, who live partly in the past, naturally are subject to resentment, are subject to negative states, just as those people who live in the future, hoping for things to take place which will make them happy, afraid of things that will take place that’ll make them unhappy. And when the mystics say, the past and the future prevent a human

being from living fully, it's a very valuable secret. When somebody tries to talk to you about the past, it is not good to encourage them. When your mind turns to the past, keep repeating the mantram.

Similarly, even about the future, if you live right today, tomorrow is going to be right. Where is the need to worry? If you live for the welfare of all today, tomorrow your life is going to be full. Where is the need for anxiety? It is this tremendous conviction, this all-pervasive *shraddha* that enables the mystic, great or small, man or woman, to live completely in the present.

And on the question of samskaras – of latencies, potentials, potencies, or as the Buddha calls them, asavas, compulsions built up through repeated thinking, repeated speaking, repeated acting – to cultivate a negative attitude, it takes a lot of effort to become resentful. It requires a lot of hard work.

And when in meditation – this is what I promised to touch upon at dinner – when in meditation, as many of our friends have come to this state, we find that we have traveled over one stratum. Our concentration is good, but there are still distractions, there is still some impediment, but there is a distinct feeling that a door is about to open, that we are about to change levels of consciousness. One of the very precious keys to doing this, which may sometimes takes years, sometimes only months, is when your desire for knowing what is in store deep below, that is *jijnasu*, when you're burning with eagerness to know what lies in your basement of consciousness, when you can hardly wait for one more day to enter this treasure house, where, all the great scriptures say, the pearl of untold price is lying there. Or as the Buddha calls it, *Om mani padme hum*, the gem of untold value is lying there.

There will come a time – in my case, I don't think it is due to my powers of concentration, which were very good even in the early days, nor even due to my enthusiastic *sadhana*, but in my heart I have no doubt that it is my teacher's grace that enabled the door to open, enabled me to enter the treasury and see for myself what untold resources I have in this treasury, which is in everybody. Now, it is very difficult to put into words my own personal experience, but I want to inspire everybody to put everything they have into their *sadhana* so that that door will open and admit them into the treasure house of their own resources. So I'm going to give you a very illusory picture, to the best of my abilities, of what happened.

Like everybody else, I had many hopes. Most of them were harmless. A few were immature, but most of them were connected with literature. Most of them were connected with culture. That's why I say most of my hopes were harmless. And like everybody, like every one of you, if you had asked me in those days before I took to meditation, when I was quite successful according to Indian standards in many fields, where I was looked upon as a very promising speaker, very promising writer, a very lovable teacher, even in those days, I would have told you just what everybody would say today, "If I am able to write a few books of lasting literary appeal." For some it may be play, for others it may be novel, for some others it may be poetry,

for some others it may be, say, short stories. I'm paraphrasing to make it applicable for all. I would have said, how wonderful would it be for me if my books could get published in, say, by Victor Gollance or in this country by Simon and Schuster, with whom I had some correspondence. And how wonderful it would be if, if it appears as, on the Book of the Month, is it? Pardon? Yeah, but what do you call it? If it is selected as a Book of the Month, or maybe translated into Spanish. I would have considered it, I would have totally, honestly, oh, I'd be so happy that people are reading my books, enjoying themselves, which is a very harmless aspiration.

In the case of many other people, the vast majority of people, they would say, "If I could only make a million dollars." Today they would probably say twenty million because, eighteen million, for that is the inflation. "If I could make eighteen million, and if I could travel around the world every year," just as there are people who do it every year. In everyone's case, this is our shraddha, just as it was my shraddha: if only I could do all this writing and publishing and winning an appreciate, captive readership.

What I was saying is that my happiness is dependent upon certain uncertain events in the external world. And the Gita and the Dhammapada would say, you couldn't be a very secure man if every day you are thinking, "Will they publish? Will they not publish? What will the reviewers say? What will the reviewers not say? What would the readers do?" Finally, "Would your books, would my books be sold by Dalton or would they end up in Goodwill?" Yeah, even great authors have ended up in Goodwill. I have picked quite a few books from Goodwill. And because of my acquaintance with literature, this has been a constant fear for even successful authors, successful playwrights. "How long will the temperamental public pay for our books? How long will the changing public read us?" The Buddha will say, that's it. As long as you're trying to find your security on what changes, you can never be secure. That is the mental state behind all of this.

Now, the extraordinary event that took place inwardly was when the door opened into the unconscious, when I showed my card near the little wicket gate on my way to the lower stacks, and when I entered, then the world within became as real as the world without, neither more nor less. It's very important to remember that the world within – there's actually a book called *The World Within* by a well-known Hindu mystic. When now the world within became as real to me as the world without. Let me repeat it: The world without did not become less real, but the barrier fell between the world without and the world within. It is an arbitrary barrier. There is no division between the world within and without. If you ask me am I an introvert or am I an extrovert, which I was asked many times by psychologists in the early days in Berkeley, I would say, "When I am with people, I am an extrovert. When I am with myself, I am an introvert." It's like my jacket. I can wear it inside out. Or it's like some of the beautiful saris the ladies have. If it is a bright day, you can wear a color that responds to brightness. If it is a day without the sun shining, you can wear the other side out. In other words, even the concept introvert and extrovert doesn't apply. There is no inward life; there is no outward life.

And when this barrier fell, I say, I want to repeat, it did not fall because I brought it about. It fell because of my teacher's blessing. Then my dependence upon events in the external world disappeared. In other words, when this tremendous landmark for me took place, I realized that I was not dependent for my security upon any event in the external world, anybody in the external world, any position, any acquisition, any achievement in the external world. All security was within; all love was within. And with that discovery, I became completely independent.

THE GLORY OF THE EARTH

May 17, 1980, Part Two

We are about to conclude the great Buddhist scripture called the Dhammapada, which we took up for our practical commentary about three years ago. And the Buddha now is saying, *yassa pure cha paccha*. I have committed many mistakes, usually in ignorance, you know. So don't try to idealize my past. I was just like everybody else, committed mistakes in my ignorance. I don't think I ever tried to hurt anybody, but sometimes I hurt not knowingly. And this is why I often repeat to you my teacher's compassion. When I would come, when I was in a very difficult situation – caused by ignorance – I would say, "Hey, Granny, what would you do, if you were in this situation in which I find myself?" She will put her arm round me and say, "Little Lamp, I wouldn't get into that situation." And now I know how wise it is.

And this is where I am trying to show my love every day for you. Don't get into situations where you are going to suffer. Don't get into situations where you are going to inflict suffering on others. If you inflict suffering on others, the Buddha will say, that suffering will follow you wherever you go. It is a physical law. It is an emotional law. And, of course, it is a spiritual law. So I don't look back upon the mistakes that I've committed, and I don't look forward to anything else to make me complete. I am complete now, just as I want all of you to be complete. And I rest completely on today, and because I try to do whatever lies in my power to show my love and respect for all of you, I have no doubts about tomorrow. Because when the barrier falls between the world without and the world within, it changes your perspective. I used to think, just as all of you do, that if certain events changed about me, then my state of mind will change. This is what he is trying to say: if you can get this, if you can get that, then you'll become happy. What you're saying is, if I can expect certain changes to take place within me, then my mental state would change.

The Gita will say, no, it's the other way around. When there is only love in your heart for all, when there is only this desire to serve all around you, then external circumstances change. Then your love, your desire to serve will act on circumstances and bring about corresponding changes. *Yassa pure cha paccha cha*.

Akimchanam anadanam. *Akimchanam*, who wants nothing to complete himself, who wants nothing to complete herself. It is when you feel incomplete that you try to grab at others. When you feel that you are incomplete, then you try to grab at things, to grab at objects. And again in the Buddhist tradition, when I see somebody raging like a tornado in a shopping center, what I see is a very incomplete person. When I see somebody looking at all those nice things in the shop window and going through the Emporium from one door and coming out of the other door without encumbrances, I'll say the person has a sense of some completeness.

So even if you want to buy an umbrella, just decide the kind of umbrella you want, the one that you push the button, it goes up. Decide upon it beforehand, look for it, pick it up, and come out. I have seen people going to buy umbrellas coming out with shoes, people going to buy shoes coming out with umbrellas. Even then there, looking at the mental state, if the Buddha were to meet somebody coming out of Emporium, he will say, “You went in to buy a quilt. How is it that you are coming out with a pogo stick?” According to the Buddha, he will say, “In other words, you don’t know what you want.” See, the Buddha is not talking about spending money. The Buddha is saying, “You don’t know what you want.”

And he is going to use a word now: *akimchanam*. We should know our needs and we should fulfill those needs well. *Anadanam*, because he doesn’t ask anything from life. That’s the splendor of the illumined man or woman who says, if – let me see – it is said of Lord Byron, the poet. You know, who started the open-collar fashion? The sports collar was started by Lord Byron. When he was a little baby, I think it is Lord Macaulay who tells the tale very well. He said, all the fairies came to bless the baby, including what you call the Tooth Fairy, is it? And Macaulay can have a very dramatic touch. He came to India. It is because of him that I speak English. He introduced the English scheme of education to make a lot of clerks, and I used his facility for becoming something different.

He said, every fairy came and blessed. They said, “May he be handsome.” And you know, Byron was a very handsome figure. “May he be brilliant.” He was very brilliant. “May he be a poet.” And there was one fairy who was not invited. She got very annoyed, very angry. And she came in and, as all the others fairies were going out, she said – they tried to block her. They said, “We have all given little Gordon” – that’s his name – “our blessings.” And then the Tooth Fairy said, “With every blessing, I add a curse.”

And Byron, I’m quoting roughly from Macaulay, he had a face that sculptors used to copy and a foot the lameness of which the beggars on the street mimicked. He had a brilliant intellect, but such a destructive vein in it that wherever he went, this blessing and this curse would follow him together. So, it is not that we are born perfect, we are born very loving. It’s good to admit that we have a very selfish strain in all of us, sometimes even what you call a very mean strain. See, this word “mean” is not used in the sense in which you use here. And in the early days, I wouldn’t even understand, you know, “He’s mean to me.” It’s not a usage with which I used to be acquainted, but now I think, we have all a mean strain in us.

But this is where I have the great good fortune to come from a tradition where the emphasis is on original goodness. You just see the perspective. Instead of saying, “Hey Brian, why don’t you get over your original sin?” what I am going to say is, “Brian, why don’t you claim your original goodness?”

There is a great deal of difference in approach, you know. In people, instead of looking upon Gale or Roseanne or Lynne as selfish, I can always look upon them as selfless and expect them

to be selfless. I'm going to be careful. Don't think this is not knowing that sometimes even nice girls can cause a bit of trouble, but keeping my eye on what is good, what is beautiful. That is what original goodness is.

And if you want to be free in life, I wish I could convey to you what utter freedom it is not to want anything from life. Whenever you want anything from life, you are a hostage. Whenever you are expecting events to come your way, you are a hostage. But if you can reach that state where the barrier falls between the inner world and the outer world, where you are no longer dependent upon events, then all that you want is to give and give and give. It is life now that is asking of you, live long, live a vigorous life because we want so much to have you with us. This is the attitude that all of us can cultivate daily, according to the Buddha, if you want to become enlightened.

And the third verse:

*usabham pavaram viram mahesim vijitavinam
anejam nahatakam buddham tam aham brumi brahmanam.*

Every word should be like a medal on our chest. Don't you have ribbons and medals? This is it, *usabham*. Do you want to be manly? Do you want to be womanly? Then become enlightened, become illumined. He's not talking about becoming divine. He says, if you're going to attack, if you're going to wage war, in what way are we different from the lions or the tigers? The Buddha says, to be gentle, to be nonviolent, to be loving always, to be supportive always, that is being manly; that is being womanly.

[Section Two]

Pavaram, in the sense of, you say "elite." This, these are the elite, the Buddha says. Do you call them Four Hundred, Four Hundred Families, what do you call them? The Four Hundred Club, Boston Brahmin, is it? I have forgotten some of these phrases, you see. This is the highest caste, not based upon birth, but based upon discipline. Not based upon what they have, but based upon what they give.

Viram. *Viram* means the real hero, the real soldier who has won the great battle against himself, who has won the great battle against herself. *Mahesim*. *Mahesim* is Pali for *maharshi*. *Maharshi*, the great sage, just as we say Ramana Maharshi. *Vijitavinam*. The Buddha says, here is the man who has come back from the war victorious. Just as in the olden days, the people who came back from the war, they were received with brass bands, banners flying, given banquets. And everybody used to go and congratulate them.

The Buddha says, that's what you should do to the illumined man or illumined woman who has, for your sake and mine, waged a long, fierce war against his own weaknesses, her own

weaknesses, and won. What is that song they sing? “Conquering hero comes . . .” Some of you help me who have – “See the conquering hero comes,” and any other? “Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,” pin the medal, drink the wine. Do all this. When you see somebody who has conquered himself, because now he’s your lover; she’s your lover always, *viram*.

Anejam, nobody now can shake him. No force on earth can shake her, unshakable, *sthita prajna*. *Nahatakam*, impossible now to win over them, to force them to swerve from their path, to force them to lose their love.

Buddham tam aham. *Buddham*, he’s now using himself. Very nicely, he says, “The enlightened one – [winks].” That’s the Buddha, you see. There must be some villagers saying, “Who is this enlightened one?” And he must have heard.

And the last verse:

pubbe-nivasam yo vedi saggapayam cha passati
atho jatikkhayam patto abhinnavosito muni
sabbavositavosanam tam aham brumi brahmanam

Pubbe-nivasam yo vedi, who knows all his previous births, who knows all her previous births. What is said here is who knows through personal experience now how long it must have taken to build up so much self-will, how long it must have taken to become so utterly separate, who is able to trace *samskaras*. It is a very fascinating pursuit, to be able to trace your anger, just as you can trace a road, a country road. Even though it changes its name. What is that road that becomes Carmody? Pardon? See, you’re following Smith Road. Suddenly you see Carmody, and you say, “I am lost.” Oh, no, it’s the same old road. Have you ever traced San Pablo? I did, with Mary. It went on and on and on and on and on. Then suddenly I breathed a heavy sigh of relief because San Pablo came to an end. It’s like that. *Samskaras* will go on and on and on and on, and somewhere they’ll come to an end.

And the Buddha now says, *pubbe-nivasam yo vedi saggapayam cha passati*, who is able to see, literally, heaven and hell at the same time. In other words, who is able to live in complete joy but always remember that there are many around him who are in great sorrow. There is a real tendency to bask in joy, to – I think the phrase is to get caught. It’s like the bee getting caught in honey, in the same honey that it has made. And there have been one or two figures in mysticism who unfortunately have become so basking in their own infinite joy that they have forgotten the world, the suffering world, and therefore denied it the great love and service they could render. And in Western mysticism, it is put very picturesquely. It says, the mystic has one eye on eternity because he knows he is the Self.

Na jayate mriyate. Who was never born, who will never die. But at the same time, he also knows the vast number of people around him, that they do not know that they are the Self.

They think they are the body, the mind, the ego, so they are born, so they will die. So he is able to understand their needs, problems, and difficulties, but the solution he will give is from the world of, from eternity, from the world beyond time and space and causality, of which he is already aware.

Atho jatikkhayam patto, for him there is no more need to return, for her there is no more need to return. If they come, they come as *bodhisattvas*: to serve the world, to serve others. And if we all become united in Krishna, Hindu sages and Buddhist sages will say, we also may be given the opportunity to come together again, live together again, to serve those around us.

Abhinna, who is wise; *vosito*, who is active. The Buddha says, not getting illumined and then getting inside a cave and putting up a rock and saying, “Keep out.” Here, active, coming out in the world, working, serving, just as we do through the press, through the clinic, through the garden, through the kitchen, through the office, everywhere.

Muni, whose self-will has become silent. *Sabbavositavosanam*, who has done what needs to be done. See, look at the way he concludes, it’s just like Patanjali. Patanjali will say, in illumination, you will see something tremendous. And the disciples all gather around him, say that again! You will see yourself as you are. Similarly, the Buddha now says, the illumined man has done his job. The illumined woman has finished her task. They have gone home. *Tam aham brumi brahmanam*, it is such people who are the glory of the earth. It is such people who give a new direction to civilization. And even sixty of us here, working together, living together, loving together, keeping our eyes always on the supreme goal. Even though we are only sixty ordinary, little people working over a long period – twenty years, thirty years – we can bring about remarkable changes in society. And this is why I appeal to everyone to keep their eyes always on the goal and to strive day and night to make our contribution to life.

VERSES

*yassa gatim na jananti devagandhabbamanusa
khinasavam arahantam tam aham brumi brahmanam*

That one I call a brahmin whose way no one can know. They live free from past and future; they live free from decay and death.

Dhammapada, Chapter Twenty-six, verse thirty-eight

*mayyeva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim niveshaya
nivasishyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na samshayah*

Still your mind in me, still your intellect in me, and without doubt you will be united with me forever.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter Twelve, verse eight

*yassa pure cha paccha cha majjhe cha n'atthi kimchanam
akimchanam anadanam tam aham brumi brahmanam*

Possessing nothing, desiring nothing for their own pleasure or their own profit, they have become a force for good, working for the freedom of all.

Dhammapada, Chapter Twenty-six, verse thirty-nine

*usabham pavaram viram mahesim vijitavinam
anejam nahatakam buddham tam aham brumi brahmanam*

That one I call a brahmin who is fearless, heroic, unshakable, a great sage who has conquered death and attained life's goal.

Dhammapada, Chapter Twenty-six, verse forty

*pubbe-nivasam yo vedi saggapayam cha passati
atho jatikkhayam patto abhinnavosito muni
sabbavositavosanam tam aham brumi brahmanam*

They have reached the end of the way; they have crossed the river of life. All that they had to do is done: they have become one with all life.

Dhammapada, Chapter Twenty-six, verse forty-one

*na jayate mriyate va kadachinnayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah
ajo nityah shashvato 'yam purano na hanyate hanyamane sharire*

You were never born; you will never die. You have never changed; you can never change. Unborn, eternal, immutable, immemorial, you do not die when the body dies.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter Two, verse twenty

TERMS

arhat “One who is worthy;” a saintly or illumined person.

asava See *samskara*.

bodhisattva In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, an enlightened person who vows to go on being reborn in order to help others.

brahmin A person who strives to know Brahman, the Supreme Reality. In the traditional Hindu caste system, the word brahmin referred to a member of the priestly or learned caste. The Buddha maintains that the true brahmin is not someone who belongs to a particular social position, but one who has attained stillness of mind.

Gita The Bhagavad Gita, “The Song of the Lord,” a Hindu scripture. It contains the instructions of the Lord (represented as Sri Krishna) to his friend and disciple Arjuna, a warrior prince who represents anyone trying to live a spiritual life in the midst of worldly activity and conflict.

Katha Upanishad The Upanishads are a collection of India’s ancient scriptures. One of the most dramatic, the Katha tells the story of Nachiketa, a daring teenager who goes to the King of Death to learn the secret of immortality.

Little Lamp Pet name given Easwaran by his grandmother.

Lord Byron (1788–1824) English poet.

Lord Macaulay (1800–1859) English historian, statesman, and poet.

Om mani padme hum “Jewel in the lotus of the heart,” a Buddhist mantram.

Patanjali Ancient Indian sage and philosopher. Author of the *Yoga Sutras*.

Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) Indian mystic.

sadhana One’s spiritual practice.

samskara A firmly established habit of thought and action, usually negative.

Shankara A seminal figure of the Hindu tradition (c. 788–820) born in Kerala state, South India.

shraddha Faith.

Sri Krishna In Hinduism, the Lord of Love who dwells in the hearts of all. Also see *Gita*.

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